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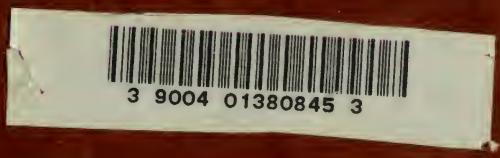

MAN, THE ARCHITECT

OF HIS

OWN FORTUNE:

A LECTURE

BY THE

REV. J. H. JOHNSON, M. A.

Delivered in the School Room of the Wesleyan Church, Gabriel Street, Montreal, on Feb. 11th, 1862, and published at the request of the audience.

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Mr. Chairman and Christian Friends,—

The question, "What is man?" has often been asked, and variously answered. Many theories have been formed, and much speculation has been employed, to explain the nature and properties of the mysterious being to whom the interrogatory refers. A celebrated poet has told us, that—

"The proper study of mankind, is man."

To this study I propose to direct your thoughts. I shall not, however, undertake a metaphysical disquisition, but endeavor to make my observations simple and practical, with a view to benefit the large assembly of young persons before me.

Man may be contemplated as a physical, an intellectual, and a moral being. His position in this world subjects him to wants, infirmities, and sorrows. His life is a chequered scene. He is "of few days," and these are "full of misery." The Scriptures reveal to us his character as a probationer for eternity. But in this lecture I shall view him under a different aspect. Without any minute reference to the dignity of his origin, or to his destiny in a future state, I shall treat of him as the *architect of his own fortune in this life*. I offer for proof the following proposition: That every man, with certain obvious exceptions arising from imbecility or external control—possesses in himself the means for shaping his own destiny, securing his own mode of subsistence, and determining his position amongst men.

Man not only commences life as helpless as any other animal, but he is much longer in arriving at maturity, and remains longer in need of the fostering care of parents or guardians. But we see the same individual, after a gradual and continual development of his faculties, rising through a regular succession, from infancy to childhood, from childhood to youth, and thence to manhood, until he assumes his position and asserts his dignity as "lord of the creation." He then appears the most expressive development of physical and intellectual power, and the noblest specimen of educational influence the world affords. And whatever may be said respecting the original differences in men's constitutions and character, it is certain they are materially affected by an unlimited variety of circumstances, of incidents, climate, society, examples, and precepts. Still, in the midst of these surrounding influences, it is in the pro-

vince of every man to act for himself, and by a judicious selection of his occupation, and an industrious and constant employment of his energies, to secure the advantages of that tide in human affairs which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.

A few remarks on the term fortune, may be of importance in the outset of the lecture. Its primary meaning seems to have been, "the arrival of something in a sudden or unexpected manner." The ancients regarded fortune as a goddess, and as such they adored her. She had moreover the reputation of being a very fickle deity. The classical student admires the beautiful lines in the 3rd book of the Odes of Horace:—

> "While propitious, I praise her, and bless her glad stay;
> But if, waving her light wings, she flies far away,
> Why, wrapped in my virtue, her gifts I resign,
> And honest, though poor, I shall never repine."

Fortune, in modern use, is understood to be "a power supposed to distribute arbitrarily the allotments of life." An eminent lexicographer defines it to mean "the good or ill that befalls man; success, good or bad; event; the chance of life; means of living; wealth; estate; possessions; great wealth; a man's portion; futurity; destiny." It will be seen that the word embraces an interesting collection of objects. But the words *situation in life*, and *happiness* or *misery arising therefrom*, will mainly express the nature of that fortune, of which I shall show that man is the architect or builder. Happiness is the great pursuit of man, and all circumstances will be considered favorable or unfavorable, according as they contribute to or prevent this.

I take it for granted, that every person possessed of ordinary capacity, *fixes his mind upon some purpose*, which it would be at least a gratification to him to accomplish. This is inseparable from the existence of those powers we call desires, so prominent in every breast. An examination of these moral principles, tracing their influence upon the character and conduct of mankind, not only falls within the scope of this lecture, but is of the highest importance in teaching young people the knowledge of themselves, and assisting them in the gratification of those aspirations which are lawful and ennobling. Desire is a longing after an object, on the attainment of which we suppose our happiness to depend. The desires are numerous and diversified, and are lawful or unlawful, according to the nature of the object towards which they are exercised, and the degree in which they may be indulged. Some persons may desire objects which others regard as worthless, and gen-

erally it may be affirmed that every human being has a particular ruling desire in his or her breast, good or evil, which is calculated to give bent to the mind, and ultimately decide the moral character of its possessor. Profitably, then, may we contemplate some of the most common objects of desire.

Our *animal propensities*, usually denominated *the appetites*, naturally first suggest themselves. It is melancholy to reflect, that a part of our race live seemingly but to gratify these principles in their physical nature. The observing mind of Socrates discovered similar characters in his day, and by his wonted practical instruction admonished them in the well known aphorism—"many men live, that they may eat and drink; but I eat and drink, that I may live." Unquestionably man's animal nature requires the appetites to supply its demands. They give notice when that nature needs nutrition, and they are intended to regulate the supply; but they themselves must be regulated by a higher principle, or they run into excess, and degenerate into sin. Without restraint, they assume control over a man; for either servants or masters they are sure to be, and the ruin of their slaves is infallibly effected. It is difficult to contemplate a more degraded specimen of a rational and immortal being, than is furnished by the victim of appetite. Nor are the evils confined to the man himself. He who lives in the unrestrained indulgence of appetite, is a moral pest to the community. And in this connexion, we ought, perhaps, to view all the lower order of human passions, in which man is but little distinguished from the brute creation. Without enumerating them, we may speak of their effects, and exhort the young to guard against their cultivation.

Men are differently constituted, intellectually and physically, and to whatever religious opinions the subject may lead, it cannot be disputed by moral philosophers, that the constitutional tendencies of individuals greatly vary. There exist with respect to every man, what are appropriately called "besetting sins." These constitute the man's vulnerable part—the weak place in the citadel, which requires to be vigilantly guarded against the approach of the enemy. One of the most celebrated philosophers of the last century furnishes us with the following maxim: "All men that are ruined, are ruined on the side of their natural propensities." History and observation as well as divine revelation, confirm this sentiment. What wisdom therefore, in those precepts which enjoin restraint. How essential a part of moral education, that a curb be put upon human passions, and that the animal tendencies be prevented from unduly influencing

the character. Every man who follows his own natural inclinations, will soon find himself involved in difficulties, and subjected to mental anguish. This shows us the paramount importance of the divine principle of religion, not only to regulate and restrain, but to eradicate vicious tendencies from the moral nature. Christianity presents us with the only real balm for diseases of the soul. And as all men have by nature the germs of these diseases in their constitution, and by practice more or less develope them in their life and character, every man, without an exception, ought to seek diligently for the grace of God, until he obtain it in his heart. The great apostle uttered a sublime truth when he said: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." The mind that can grasp this truth, and rest upon it for salvation, will be secure from the debasing influence of the animal propensities.

But besides these, there are other principles in man, which need to be removed, or at least held in check. Among these, perhaps the most frequent is *the thirst for wealth*,—in its worst form, known as *avarice*. If indulged in in moderation, it is both lawful and advantageous. It prompts a man to secure a competence for himself and those dependent on him, and it furnishes him with the means of benefiting mankind, by the exercise of benevolence or Christian charity. But when carried beyond these reasonable bounds, it has a tendency to render an individual miserly and selfish. Hence we see multitudes of persons putting forth all their energies to acquire property in some of its numerous forms. If successful, they attain to a position in society; but whether an enviable one, or otherwise, depends on a variety of circumstances. It is unfortunate for the interests of morality, that wealth inspires with a certain degree of respect, apart from sterling qualities in its possessor. Now, to warn them against disappointment and sorrow, the fact can not be too prominently held up before the young, that the mere possession of wealth, so far from creating enjoyment, is a source of dissatisfaction. Moreover, from the constitution of society, but few individuals can become money-kings, and it is not desirable that they should. Crœsus and Rothschild are rare names, and he is unwise who aims to gain their elevation. That fortune of which you really may become the architects, young men, should be something both more noble, and more easily acquired. I do not, indeed, say that all men of wealth have been a curse to society. Far from it. Many have been benefactors to their race, and have served

the wise purpqses of Providence in ministering to the wants of his creatures. But I wish to point out to the young the danger of avarice, and the improbability of success in attaining that fortune which is its object.

The love of applause is another ruling principle in men. Some are more under its influence than others; but I apprehend there are few persons who do not actually desire the approbation of their fellow men. Flattery is acceptable to most people, though much depends in its reception, upon the manner in which it is administered. There is a secret satisfaction, not always suppressed, which those feel whose conduct is praised by others. We see it in the child—who is only a man in miniature, artless and ingenuous—whose eye kindles, and whose step is quickened, by the praise of its parent or teacher; we see it in the young man, who labors diligently as a student, or in some department of life, which brings his genius before the public; we see it in the young lady, who is gratified with the praises bestowed by society upon her beauty or accomplishments; and we see it even in the aged of all classes, who delight to draw upon them the admiration of beholders. Suitably regulated, this principle is commendable, and is of considerable value in stimulating the young to exertion. Indeed, it is an attribute of every great and generous mind. That young man is but shortly removed from ruin, who is indifferent to the opinions of his fellowmen with respect to him. Rashness and indiscretion are certain to hurry him on to some evil deed, and involve him in wretchedness. No person, and especially no young person, is safe without those wholesome restraints which public opinion is calculated to impose upon him.

Let me be understood. I recommend no man to make the opinion of others the rule of his conduct. Every body should have a mind of his own, and cherish within him a principle of rectitude, by which every action and circumstance should be tried. At the same time, I advise young people to pay a proper deference to the opinion of others, and to examine carefully the ground upon which they stand, when they find it necessary to take a position contrary to that of the community. Human judgment is fallible. Erroneous opinions lead to erroneous practices; and the fact that older and maturer minds differ from ours, should beget in us caution. Still the wisest of our fellow men may be astray, and we should have sufficient independence, finally to act from our own conviction of what is right. It cannot be disputed, that the sentiment and

practice of a whole community may be wrong. We have, then, for our guidance the divine precept: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." I would enjoin upon the young the importance of shunning the society of the vicious, of giving no heed to their sneers, and of rather glorying in their censure. But, on the other hand, seek to render yourselves worthy of the esteem of the wise and virtuous. Count it an honor to stand high in the opinion of such, and let it be an invariable object with you to act from moral principle.

Closely connected with the love of approbation, is *the sentiment of emulation*, or *the desire to excel*. Those who have had anything to do with the instruction of youth, know that this is one of the most powerful principles in human nature. Its influence is generally brought to bear upon the students in our seminaries of learning, and to such an extent is it carried, that not a few of the most successful teachers in Britain and America have maintained, that on the whole, its development in the halls of science is productive of more evil than good, and hence have abandoned the system which calls it into exercise. I incline to the opinion, however, that the danger in this case arises from the abuse, and not from a judicious use of this element in man's organization. When unrestrained it often leads to improper means to accomplish its ends, and engenders malignant desires. But it may be so employed as to serve a noble purpose in attaining the objects of life. What is the ruling principle in our display of agricultural and mechanical productions, witnessed on a large scale in the World's Industrial Exhibition, but a laudable desire to excel in objects which contribute to the comfort of the race? Too frequently, however, this desire displays itself in matters of small moment, if not of injury to others. Many young persons aim simply at the distinction of performing some exploit, the sole claim to honor being, that it was never performed before. Others trample on the rights of their fellows, in order to excel in the objects to which they have directed their energies. The desire of superiority alone, without any intelligible advantage, influences many in the great competitions of life. In determining his course, I would therefore say to every young man: "Be ambitious to excel; but let it be in something ennobling to your own character, and profitable to others. Nurture a principle of pure and exalted emulation in your breast, always aiming to imitate, and if possible surpass the achievements of those who have been the greatest benefactors to their race."

Another dangerous passion is *ambition*, or *the love of power*. There are many who resemble Milton's description of Satan: "they would rather reign in hell, than serve in heaven." Few tendencies of man's moral nature are more absorbing in their influence, or exercise a stronger impelling power over their possessor. The history of mankind abounds in illustrations of this principle. Most of the heroes of ancient and modern times were under its dominion. We read of an Alexander leading his disciplined bands to the remotest countries, for the conquest of a world; and we read of a Napoleon, after his genius had constructed the most splendid empire the world ever beheld, sacrificing the most tender domestic affections, with a view to perpetuating the power he had overcome so many obstacles in establishing. The statesman, actuated by this motive, frequently deprives himself of every personal comfort, not excepting health of body, and peace of mind. The prime minister, generally speaking, furnishes us with a conspicuous example of ambition. As a rule, it may be estimated that the man who, more than any other, pursues the empty bubble of an evanescent popularity, is he who stands at the helm to guide the ship of state. Public opinion is known to be so changeable, and political misfortunes so powerfully arouse the minds of a free people, that there is a strong disposition to censure those who have to bear the burden of responsibility. Although there are illustrious exceptions under the noble constitution of England, yet we find many that once stood high in the estimation of the people, who without any fault of their own, have fallen into disfavor. Popularity exposed to such reverses, is a dangerous possession. He who makes it the principal object of his pursuit, and bases on it his highest enjoyment, will find it at best a precarious fortune.

But power and influence over others may be productive of much good. He who in high places sets a pattern of uprightness, and aims by precept and example, to improve the condition of his race, is one of God's best gifts to man. The late Prince Consort, whom a nation now mourns, and the savor of whose virtue and zeal in promoting the arts of peace and civilization, is felt throughout the countries of the earth, presents us with a conspicuous instance of an exalted ambition. History will have the pleasing task to record of him, that he devoted his life to promote the interests of his wife's subjects in particular, and of mankind in general, and that his untimely death produced universal regret. And let it never be forgotten, that the highest family in the land, has been a pattern of

social happiness, and of moral purity. The reign of our beloved Queen has been marked by an undeviating fidelity to virtue and religion.

Should it be the fortune of any whom I address, to obtain extensive influence in the community, their minds should be impressed with the increase of moral responsibility which will attach to them, and every energy should be expended in attempts to improve the condition of society. The love of power, if cherished with a view to this purpose, is a commendable element in man's constitution.

I must not overlook *the great subject of education.* In building a fortune for yourselves, you can do but little without knowledge. And knowledge, be it remembered, is not intuitive with any person; nor does it come as a matter of course with our advance in years. It is acquired by observation, by experience, and by hard study. It calls into active exercise all the faculties we possess. It relates to our physical, intellectual, and moral natures. Every power we have may be developed by education: indeed, man is a very inferior creature without the transforming power of this principle. The work of education is not confined to our colleges and seminaries, but it begins in the nursery, it is carried on throughout childhood, in our youthful sports, in the recreations of riper years, in the mechanics' shops, in our intercourse with mankind, and in every department and situation in life. There is unquestionably a vast difference amongst men. With the same facilities, some learn much more than others. We see some drawing knowledge from every source, while others pass through life, making few observations, and learning nothing but what forces its way into their minds, in spite of themselves. No person can learn every thing; but every body should learn what he can. I mean that he should improve every opportunity to store his mind with useful knowledge, and to develope all the faculties of his being. In this enlightened age of the world, no fortune a man may acquire will be regarded as sufficient without education. A person may have large estates, money in abundance, and be surrounded by the appliances of physical comfort, but, destitute of intellectual culture, he is a miserable pauper, and is of necessity excluded from some of the most interesting circles of society. Strongly would I urge upon you, my young friends, to make every reasonable sacrifice, in order to obtain an education; and having laid a good foundation in the study of the sciences in our schools, build upon it every day of your lives, —let a certain portion of your time be devoted especially to the erection of this great pillar in the temple of your fortune.

But the most important consideration of all, is *the development of the moral faculties.* These form the higher nature of man. Every person should give serious attention to those obligations which rest upon him as a member of society, and particularly as a moral being, accountable to the Great Ruler of the universe. There is no stage in life in which we should be for a moment without the influence of the moral principle upon our conduct, and even upon our thoughts. No enterprise should have a conception in the mind, much less should any be undertaken and carried on, without the principles of uprightness and purity to govern us in our connexion therewith. We have furnished us in the numerous biographies published, examples of those who have been distinguished for their moral integrity, and whose fortune was one of glory and happiness. On the other hand, instances of the immoral are given, and how fearful the warning they afford. What an appalling spectacle to witness great talents perverted, large wealth acquired, and a fortune established upon the unholy bases of selfishness and dishonesty. Inattention to the claims of morality and religion, has covered many a man of genius with imperishable infamy. What accumulated miseries have arisen from the want of duly regulating the animal propensities, from the love of money, the desire of power, the contests of rivals, and the tumults of factions,—what envy, hatred, malignity, and revenge. The teachings of history demonstrate, that without moral restraint, the strivings of men after fortune lead to scenes of strife, and deeds of darkness. Now, a higher principle than mere morality, is *religion.* Where this has a place in the heart, it adjusts all the moral faculties, and gives man his true position. That was a noble sentiment of the great Patrick Henry, which he recorded in his last will and testament: "I have now disposed of all my property to my children. There is one thing I wish I could give them, and that is, the Christian religion. If they had that, and nothing else, they would be abundantly rich; but without religion, though they owned the whole world, they would be poor indeed."

I have thus discussed the subject of the leading desires in the breast, and the main principles which influence human actions; because I know that one or more of these must form the ruling principle in every person's life, and I deem it essential that the use and the abuse of all these should be clearly understood. First make sure that the object you have in mind be a lawful one, and then, in building your fortune, bring into requisition all the means necessary to obtain it.

Man is so constituted, that, as a general rule, by the force of his own will, he can lay the foundation, prepare all the materials, and construct a fortune for himself. Every man ought to aim at being *somebody*. He who has no fixed purpose of life, who rests satisfied with the mere perpetuation of his existence, content with a supply of his present wants, doing nothing that may reflect lustre upon his character, is unconsciously building himself a fortune,—not, however, a splendid mansion, but a wretched hovel. The materials are despicable, and the structure must prove a monument of shame.

Great care should be taken in the selection of your objects. Original powers of mind, and indomitable energies, have been thrown away upon trifles. We are told by an Italian author, that he once saw a shepherd who used to divert himself in his lonely hours, by tossing up eggs and catching them again without breaking them. He had so far perfected himself in the practice, that he would keep up in the air four at a time, for several minutes, each falling into his hand by turns. "I think," says the narrator, "that I never witnessed a greater severity than this man exhibited in his face; for by his wonderful perseverance and application, he had contracted the seriousness and gravity of a privy counsellor; and I could not but reflect with myself, that the same assiduity and attention, had they been rightly applied, might have made him a greater mathematician than Archimedes."

The speculations of many persons, remind us of what Gulliver witnessed in a certain country not laid down in our maps. That observing traveller found in the royal academy of projectors at Lagoda, several learned professors, who were displaying the originality of their genius, exercising their inventive powers, and greatly benefiting mankind, by a series of experiments, upon which they had been employed for several years, though without success—like those who are in search of the perpetual motion. One was endeavoring to calcine ice into gunpowder, so as to furnish an article of that commodity, both brighter and cheaper; a second was making pincushions out of marble; a third was trying to petrify the hoofs of a living horse, to prevent them from foundering; a fourth was laboring to extract sunbeams from cucumbers, which he thought a more economical method of warming the atmosphere in the King's garden, and particularly useful when the sun happened to be under a cloud; a fifth was showing that the seminal property of grain exists in the chaff, instead of the kernel; a sixth was substituting

spiders for the ordinary silkworm, because they weave as well as spin, and their food is cheaper and more abundant; a seventh was endeavoring, by the application of poisonous gums, to prevent the growth of wool on a couple of lambs, hoping that in course of time he would be able to propagate a breed of naked sheep throughout the kingdom,—an experiment the success of which he demonstrated would greatly enhance the value of sheep amongst agriculturists; and an eighth was teaching the mathematics on a principle scarcely known to Euclid, Newton, or Legendre: The proposition and its demonstration were written out on a small wafer of a cephalic tincture, which the student was required to swallow on an empty stomach, the professor contending that the proposition would ascend to the brain, bearing the demonstration along with it. There is doubtless originality in the mere conception of such ideas; but to attain an honorable and useful position, a man must not craze his brain with chimerical projects or utopian theories: he must see that his object be both *right* and *attainable*. He should then act on the motto, "What man has done man can do." If conscious of an original genius, an adaptation for any particular business, whether among the industrial pursuits, commerce, or any branch of science, or professional occupation, let him apply his energies in that direction. There are multitudes in the world who have evidently mistaken their calling. This fact arises from several causes,—ignorance, pride, laziness, the desire of imitation, and the mistake of friends. I have seen men who were mere blockheads in the learned professions, that might have excelled as mechanics, or at least have obtained a respectable livelihood as agriculturists or daily laborers. Some preach the gospel, and others practice medicine, who would certainly do less harm, and possibly more good, as manufacturers of cambric needles.

But the legal profession has been most especially supplied with votaries. Many young men have studied the law in Canada, and after years of toil, have been admitted to the bar; but with all the litigation around them, they are unable to secure even a meagre subsistence. I once knew a famous legal firm in Upper Canada—for its appearance in newspaper advertisements was calculated to make it famous—which consisted of two barristers, both of them scions of Canadian aristocracies, and educated at great expense to their friends. After exhausting the means left them by their ancestors, though still maintaining their illustrious partnership at the law, they were forced to be supported, respectively, the one by a

gristmill, and the other by the clerkship of a municipal corporation! Such instances arise from two circumstances: 1st the inadaptation of men for their profession, and 2ndly the filling up of one profession with too great a number of practitioners. To so great an extent had this evil gone in the United States and Canada, that not the legal profession alone, but several others, as well as clerkships and incumbencies, were borne down by the pressure of young men upon them. The disastrous consequences to society were beginning to be felt every where, when a kind Providence, that often makes man's extremity his opportunity, interfered, and restored the equilibrium in the people's occupations, thus temporarily lost. California, Australia, and Fraser River auriferous discoveries were made, and immediately thousands of adventurers flocked to those magic lands. Of the number, but a small portion made themselves fortunes; but the learned professions and commercial situations have been relieved.

We can not dispute that occasionally may be found men of genius, who are calculated to excel in any profession or department of life. Such men may act their own pleasure, and consult their own convenience in acquiring a fortune; for by exertion, with the divine blessing, they will succeed any where. When a parent consulted Daniel Webster as to the propriety of his son studying law, and inquired "if there was room enough in the legal profession for another practitioner?" that great man replied, "There is always room enough up stairs," meaning that men of talent and application will never fail to make their way. But the rule still holds good: *a careful choice should be made in determining your course.* Consult your own taste; do not be misled by a vain desire to imitate others; and unless you possess the ability to excel, beware of any profession which has already more connected with it than it can decently maintain.

Having made a judicious selection, and being animated by noble purposes, the next important matter is, to *see that all your energies be directed to attain it; avoid laziness or inaction; mind that there be an intimate connection between the means and the end;* and *never weary in your industry*, or *be turned aside by discouragements.* To all this, I would add,—*never interfere with the rights of others.*

Indolence has proved the ruin of many. I need not speak of the grosser form of this, which displays itself in disgraceful inactivity of body, a desuetude of the physical energies; for the vic-

tims of this malady present a subject too revolting for contemplation. But there exists a slothfulness of mind, which leads to lassitude, and disqualifies for accomplishing any great object. With many this tendency is constitutional, but it is greatly augmented by habit. Whoever has given attention to the differences in children, must have observed some constantly in motion, always busy with something; if not obeying parental commands, engaged in sport or mischief. Others are quiet and inactive, unobservant, and indifferent to the busy scenes which surround them. The former require only moderate inducements to excite their activity; the latter need extraordinary influences to develope their powers, and arouse their dormant energies. Wherever this disposition to get along the easiest way, exists, a man has need of great decision of character, resolution, and correct habits, to keep him in motion. True, it is not always the dull child that makes the inactive man; for examples of the opposite description occur. But the rule is general, that in early life the constitutional tendency is evinced, and the character is formed. Every man is the architect of his own fortune. He has the power of applying his own energies, and he will have himself to blame if he does not exercise it. A man may be unacquainted with his resources, and want occasion to call them forth; but his mental powers must be of a sluggish order, who cannot find opportunity and employment for whatever ability he may possess. Keep as far as possible from *ennui*, then, young man. Up and bestir yourself; shake off dull stupor; remember that your friends, society, and the world have claims upon you. There is a special work for you to do. As your countenance differs from that of all who live, or ever existed; so does your mental formation, and you have a fortune to build for yourself, which no other person can build for you. As an architect originates the plan, and makes the specifications for the building; so every individual must form his scheme, devise the ways and means, and whatever may be the assistance he derives from others, he must personally superintend the construction of his own fortune. There is no time for idleness. You have a structure to form, which will occupy you for a whole life-time. All the motives of duty, self-interest, and the public good, should impel you to exertion. Life is short for the busy scenes which you will have to crowd into it.

But you must not only be active: you must *look well to the relations of your duties*, and study the connexion between your objects and the means employed to secure them. Without this,

your energies may be expended in vain. Those who erect a building require to make the timbers of the right proportions, and to have them nicely jointed, or their attempt will prove a failure. The architect must thoroughly understand his business, or he will subject himself to ridicule, for his work is open to inspection, and men are ever ready to pass their judgment upon it. Now, the architect of his own fortune has desires in his breast, he beholds a wide world spread out before him, and he aims to work himself to a certain position. He must definitely understand his purpose, and then he must skilfully select and judiciously exercise the means to realize it. A want of attention to this matter, has occasioned many of the failures amongst men. I knew a man who was ambitious to become a member of our Provincial Parliament. He spent twenty years of the most active portion of his life in the attempt, but always failed. Though possessed of talents far superior to those who generally opposed him, the means he employed were sadly defective. He wanted in his principles and in his conduct the elements essential to success. He could not gain the confidence of the constituency—he tried the same one at every election—and he got wider and wider from his purpose.

And, on the other hand, there are men of genuis throwing away their talents, or not using them at all, from a want of proper direction. It is said that Powers the sculptor, whose statue of the Greek Slave has secured for him a world-wide celebrity, spent some of his best days as a common plasterer. His head was examined by a phrenologist, who informed him of his genius, and in vain endeavored to excite his ambition. Subsequently a very simple circumstance aroused his sensibilities, and kindled the fire of ambition in his breast. The sight of a few simple Plaster of Paris busts of eminent individuals, in the possession of an Italian vagrant, excited his curiosity. He made inquiries, for a small sum learned the ingredients and the mode of compounding them, and from this small beginning, attained a position, made a niche for himself in the temple of fame, and became the architect of a fortune which many of the ancient masters of the art of sculpture might have envied.

With all the other advantages, *perseverance is essential to success.* However insurmountable obstacles may appear to be, patience and perseverance will generally overcome them. In fact, these qualities, rather than brilliant genius, have accomplished remarkable results. The great Sir Isaac Newton affirmed that he was more indebted to his plodding, than to his genius, for success.

Probably many persons have all the other requisites to accomplish what made him so distinguished; but they fail through a want of his untiring industry. Some may question this; but we must remember that men are accustomed to overlook the *means*, in their admiration of the *end* secured. Because magnificent points are reached, they suppose that the mental powers employed must have been of an extraordinary character. But after all, indomitable perseverance in the use of ordinary talents, may be the true secret of success. From the constitution of society, and from the organization of man, we infer that without perseverance, nine out of ten of those who have risen to eminence must have failed. In the beautiful allegory a popular writer gives us of those who aim at literary attainments, we behold the youths who for a time make rapid progress up the hill of science; but they soon weary in their journey, or wander into the groves of pleasure, forgetting the object with which they set out, and never reaching the temple of fame, which stands upon the summit of the hill. But there is the pale youth who gradually and cautiously ascends, removing every obstruction that lies in his way; he is never turned aside from his purpose; his advance is barely perceptible,—still, by prudence, temperance, economy, and above all, by unceasing application, he is making progress; his faculties are expanded and strengthened by exercise, and by and by you perceive him standing upon the desired summit. This is the history of the majority of those who are distinguished in the world of science. The life of Dr. Samuel Johnson, the great English lexicographer, shows what privations a man may have to undergo, to become a successful votary of science. But I can call to mind no more instructive example of a man being the architect of his own fortune, than that of the renowned American philosopher, Dr. Benjamin Franklin. His autobiography is a unique composition, which ought to be placed in the hand of every young person as soon as he is old enough to read it. It is written in a plain style, free from ostentation, and with a frankness which commends it to every virtuous mind. Faults are faithfully narrated, and virtues are presented for imitation. But the important lesson taught is, how a man may, by the simple capital of common sense, economy, and unremitting toil, make a fortune for himself, and erect a monument to his memory, which will last as long as the language that records it shall be spoken amongst men, or exist in literature.

This perseverance is equally essential in other departments. Dif-

ficulties will present themselves; but they must be surmounted. Discouragements will arise, but they must not be permitted to overwhelm, or even to damp the spirits. "Omnia labor vincit," must still be the motto. The man who would accomplish something noble, and secure a fortune worth possessing, must expect to encounter opposition. He must prepare to meet with the envy and hatred of those whose envy and hatred, perhaps, are their most distinguishing characteristics. But, as said by the eloquent Edmund Burke, "obloquy is a necessary ingredient in the composition of all true glory; and it was not only in the Roman customs, but it is in the nature and constitution of things, that calumny and abuse are essential parts of a triumph." He who would enjoy distinction, must make his calculations to pay the price at which it is obtained. Once elevated above the crowd, he will arouse the jealousy of some who would be glad to occupy his position. "Wo unto you when all men speak well of you," said the Great Teacher. He whom merit has raised to eminence, will likely escape this wo. The individual to whom distinction is hereditary, is not so much exposed to bitter opposition. The architect of his own fortune, is the man who stands pre-eminently a target for envy, malice, defamation, and all the baser passions. But let him preserve his integrity,—let him cherish only noble aspirations, and seek the gratification of none but worthy desires; let him remain true to his purposes, and meet calmly the shafts of calumny that may be hurled at him, encased within the impenetrable armor of a spotless character; and above all, let him put his trust in an unerring Providence that watches over the minutest affairs of mankind,—his ultimate triumph is certain. Nevertheless he will find the path to fame rugged and thorny. He who treads that path must be of an enduring character, whatever may be his abilities, and whatever his position in society.

Remember also that *fortune is generally gained by a gradual advance*. A continual dropping wears even a stone. Property is oftener acquired by small accumulations, than by dashing specutions; and the general experience of mankind has demonstrated, that the habits established in obtaining it by the former method, are more likely to secure its continuance. The principle is the same in acquiring any other kind of fortune. To make sure of permanent success, we must be content to attain our wishes gradually. By attention to little things, really great objects are secured. And though the labor of years be suddenly obliterated, "patience

should have her perfect work." The philosophy of Newton, when his little dog "Diamond," with one unlucky wag of his tail, swept the mathematical calculations of years into the burning grate, has commanded universal admiration. The great philosopher, after mildly informing his dog of the mischief he had done, instead of consuming time in unavailing regret, immediately betook himself to the task of repairing the disaster. To all who labor for a good object, I would say, "If you don't succeed at first, try again:" let no adverse circumstances discourage you.

And in all your efforts to build a fortune for yourselves, *never interfere with the rights of others.* That fortune must be, at best, of doubtful reputation, which is obtained by depriving a fellow creature of the opportunity which rightfully belonged to him. He who clandestinely seizes and appropriates the property of another, is called a *thief*; he who takes it from the owner by force, is a *robber*; and he who, with malice aforethought, deprives a fellow creature of life, is denominated an *assassin* or a *murderer*. But how much less is the moral turpitude of those who are to be seen in all the pursuits of life, rising to distinction at the expense of others? What can exceed the baseness of men who lay plans to undermine their fellows, who seek to blast their reputation, or to defeat them in their laudable purposes? Some gain property by fraud, or by taking undue advantage of people's circumstances. A fortune thus acquired may support its architect for a time; but it is worse than valueless. It is generally of short duration, and it can only reflect disgrace upon its possessor. The truth will ultimately become known, and the world is generally just enough to give every man his due.

He who would be the architect of a fortune for himself, should likewise be careful *not to take too many objects in hand at the same time.* The man that undertakes the erection of several buildings simultaneously, is in imminent risk of failing with some, and his resources may prove inadequate to the completion of any. And he who attempts to establish for himself a fortune, should be an artisan, a mechanic, a tradesman, or professional man, or select some particular employment, and steadily pursue it. Indecision in the selection, fickleness in carrying out, and dividing the energies among several objects, are equally fatal to success in any occupation. Some men have all things to do in general, but nothing in particular. Now, there are definite purposes enough to engage the attention of all, so that no man need be destitute of some honest calling.

But you should act wisely in selecting the materials with which to build your fortune. And there should be a sympathy between the mind and the object sought after. Be deeply interested in the cause or purpose to which you have committed yourselves. Unless you see to this, your labors will be performed with reluctance, and your conduct will be characterized by instability.

The indefiniteness of some people's occupation, reminds me of a scene which occurred in the New York police court. A Frenchman was brought up on a charge of vagrancy. Being asked by the magistrate, "what mode of living he followed?" he replied that he was "a professional man." When asked, "what was his profession? and why he was in such an abject condition?" he made answer, that his "profession was to smoke glass, through which to view the sun during an eclipse; but his business was very dull this year, no eclipse having yet occurred; and like many other professional gentlemen, he was just then out of employment."

In speaking of man as the architect of his own fortune, we must not overlook *the differences arising from birth and country.* Some belong to what are called "noble parents"—of aristocratic, if not royal extraction; while others are born in obscurity, and but for their own active exertions, would never have even the opportunity to acquire distinction. There are two views generally taken of these classes. The one is that adopted by Whang the miller, in one of Goldsmith's tales, who regarded the nobility and the wealthy as alone worthy of his esteem, and looked down upon all plebeians, and upon the poor, with contempt. The other view is exactly opposed to this. It has become the fashion with many to underrate everything of noble origin, and to regard great talents as necessarily associated with poverty and humble beginnings. The English Commons thus acted when they beheaded the king, and abolished the House of Lords. The revolution of the last century in France, which swept away, though temporarily as it resulted, every vestige of royalty and nobility, was based on the same principle. And pure democracy stops not short of this extreme.

But between these extremes there is a rational medium. Birth may afford a man superior advantages, wealth may give him additional facilities for improvement, but success will still depend on his own exertions. That person who relies on the virtues, or talents, or accumulations of his ancestors, to build him a fortune, or secure to him a personal reputation, is an ignoble man, no matter what may be the quality of the blood which courses through his

veins. One may be born to power, or wealth, or influence, or all these combined; but so far from regarding these as his fortune, he should simply view them as fortuitous means of acquiring a fortune. The ranks of the nobility have furnished men whose magnificent achievements have won the admiration of the world. England is not without such men to-day. She has as great men among her Lords as her Commons. But many more individuals have risen from obscurity, in monarchies as well as republics, to the highest stations in point of influence; and still more have benefited mankind by their inventions in the arts, and their discoveries in science.

That was a noble reply made by the immortal Burke to the duke of Bedford, who had scandalously assailed him for his acceptance of a pension from the government. The reply was written shortly after the death of Mr. Burke's son:

"Had it pleased God to continue to me the hopes of succession, I should have been, according to my mediocrity, and the mediocrity of the age I live in, a sort of founder of a family. I should have left a son, who, in all the points in which personal merit can be viewed, in science, in erudition, in genius, in taste, in honor, in generosity, in humanity, in every liberal sentiment, and every liberal accomplishment, would not have shown himself inferior to the Duke of Bedford, or to any of those whom he traces in his line. His grace very soon would have wanted all plausibility in his attack upon that provision which belonged more to mine than to me. He would soon have supplied every deficiency, and symmetrized every disproportion. It would not have been for that successor to resort to any stagnant wasting reservoir of merit in me, or in any ancestry. He had in himself a salient, living spring of generous and manly action. Every day he lived, he would have repurchased the bounty of the Crown, and ten times more, if ten times more he had received. He was *made* a public creature, and had no enjoyment whatever but in the performance of some duty."

Two of England's most eminent statesmen, Charles James Fox and William Pitt, were scions of nobility, but they were of the first generation after the establishment of the houses to which they respectively belonged. Neither of them was the eldest son, though both did much to give lustre to their families. The first Earl of Chatham raised himself by his own merit from a private station. William Murray, first Earl of Mansfield, was the fourth son of Lord Stormont, head of an ancient but decayed family, which had been reduced to comparative poverty by a long course of extrava-

gance. Henry Grattan was the son of an eminent barrister. R. B. Sheridan was the son of a school teacher. Sir James Mackintosh was the son of a captain in the British army. Dr. Franklin's father was a dyer, and he himself was a journeyman printer. William Hogarth, the celebrated artist and engraver, was the son of a private citizen of some literary attainments. Dr. Paley was the son of a clergyman and school teacher. Both parents of the great navigator, Captain Cook, were in the humble condition of farmer's servants on the coast of Yorkshire. The immortal Shakespeare was the son of a wool dealer in Warwickshire, and had in his early days but slender educational advantages. An unfortunate circumstance drove him from home to London, where he was without money and friends. Reduced to the last extremity, he went to the theatre, and picked up a little money by taking care of the horses of the gentlemen who came to the play. From such a small commencement, he became the father of the British stage, the improver of the language, and an ornament to his country. He was, in a peculiar sense, the architect of his own fortune. George Canning, the accomplished statesman, was the son of a private gentleman in moderate circumstances. Martin Luther was descended from poor parents, and while engaged in study, was sometimes obliged to beg his bread. Napoleon the Great had his own fortune to make in the world; but

> "He left a name, at which the world grew pale,
> To point a moral, or adorn a tale."

More recent examples might be drawn from England, France, the United States, and other countries, not even excepting Canada, illustrating the power of genius and energy in triumphing over obstacles; but I have given sufficient to establish the principles which I have laid down as the basis of success. The conclusion to which we are brought from a careful contemplation of facts, is this —that, on the whole, it is better for a person to be born in an humble, or at most, middling station, with a moderate supply of worldly goods. Wealth and station furnish the means for high living, which enervates both body and mind; and they also present temptations to engage in practices which disqualify men for useful pursuits. On the other hand, the man who is born in comparative obscurity, knows that without great and continued exertion, he can never rise to eminence. Necessity has been called the mother of nvention, and she has certainly taught many a man how to be the architect of his own fortune. But without such a teacher, every

individual may commence and successfully pursue this object. With a good moral character for a basis, and a suitable field for his operations, he may construct for himself a fortune, as extensive as his own wants, and as durable as his existence.

Self-reliance is a virtue which every young man ought to cherish. Were I possessed of incomputable wealth, and had a son, I should require that he learn a trade, secure a profession, or resort to some other means to support himself respectably. He should do at least enough to earn his own livelihood. This much is necessary to ensure health, to keep out of mischief, and to obey the command of the Creator. An interesting anecdote is related respecting the late Stephen Girard, the American millionaire. A young man engaged to serve him as clerk for several years, receiving for his remuneration, besides his board and clothing, only whatever his master's generosity might award him at the expiration of his term. His time having expired, he asked Mr. Girard, "what he would now advise him to do?" "Learn a trade," was the laconic answer. "What trade would you recommend?" inquired the clerk. "I think a cooper's trade would suit your taste," said Girard. The young man, well knowing the peculiarity of his late employer, went and bound himself to a cooper for six months. The period of his apprenticeship having expired, he came again to Mr. Girard, and told him he had learned the trade. "Make me a dozen barrels," said the man of wealth. The cooper did so, and brought them to his former master. The latter carefully examined them, pronounced himself satisfied with the workmanship, and presented the mechanic with a cheque for $10,000. "Take this," said he, "and start yourself in the mercantile business. You have a capital to begin with, and in all probability will succeed. But should you be unfortunate, you have a trade to fall back upon, and need never come to want."

In a young and growing country like Canada, the facilities for every man to make a respectable fortune for himself, are to be found in every direction, and they are greatly increased by the liberal form of government with which we are favored. Rely, then, on your own energies, young men. Never allow any person, not even a rich parent, to do that for you, which you can do for yourselves. Store your minds with useful knowledge. Resolve to be *known* by the community. Never while away your time: let every moment be filled up with some useful employment.

"Be just, and fear not. Let all the ends you
Aim at, be your country's, your God's, and truth's."

These qualifications of mind and heart are not only compatible with your interests, but indispensable to secure them. In no case sacrifice principle to expediency. Let not a supposed present convenience tempt you to pave the way for future sorrows. Build yourselves a fortune; but let it be such as you can behold with satisfaction, and your friends may contemplate with pleasure when you shall have ceased to live. And never forget, that whatever others may do for you, from charity, friendship, affection, or services rendered them, you must be the ARCHITECTS OF YOUR OWN FORTUNES.